

# **ENVIRONMENT COMMISSION**

## **FY 2008 ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND FY 2009 GOALS**

### **Accomplishments from FY 2008:**

The Commission is pleased to present its goals and accomplishments to the Mayor and Council, the City staff and the citizens of Rockville. We have organized our submission to reflect our own organizational structure:

#### **Overall Environment Commission**

#### **High Performance Buildings Working Group**

#### **Watershed Protection Working Group**

#### **Environmental Outreach and Education Working Group.**

Each working group is comprised of at least two Commissioners as well as community volunteers who either work or live in the City of Rockville. The working groups were formed (in consultation with the City Clerk's Office) in 2005-2006 on a trial basis to advance the workload of the Commission and attract volunteers through focused objectives and work areas. After having limited success filling a roster of experts (part of our charter), the Commission formed the working groups and has found that the working groups have gone further in meeting the need for expertise and support. The working groups have also become fertile ground to reach out and identify new appointments to Commission vacancies.

For fiscal year 2009, the Environment Commission looks forward to continuing to work with City staff and the Mayor and Council on the implementation of the Sustainable Rockville Strategy and measuring its success. In the subsections that follow, we outline our Commission goals as they align to the overall Commission and the individual working groups.

#### **Overall Environment Commission**

Continue to provide issue analysis and testimony to Mayor and Council on various environmental issues facing the City

Improve communications and open regular channels for dialog with Mayor and Council such as semi-annual work sessions or other options

Improve communications and open regular channels with other departments in the City Government where environmental issues arise. Create these channels to facilitate proactive information exchange for improved environmental performance.

Assist City staff and Mayor and Council in developing relationships with outside organizations at various governmental levels, professional societies and organizations, interest groups and others entities. With the change of the Federal Administration a

renewed and more highly leveraged support for climate change policies at the state and local levels will likely occur. The City should be poised to generate, on its own and in concert with state and other local entities as well as nonprofits, a potential pipeline of projects or policy initiatives that could be supported by reinvigorated Federal funding levels for environmental initiatives. It would be unfortunate for the citizens of Rockville if the City missed its opportunity to implement innovative environmental policies for lack of tracking and preparing for these Federal-level initiatives.

Assist City efforts to measure, baseline, monitor and chronicle specific environmental activities to create databases of case studies, lessons learned, best practices and other Rockville-specific data that can assist citizens, City staff and the Mayor and Council on decisions related to environmental investments in homes, businesses, schools, green space, watersheds, etc.

Work with the City staff and Mayor and Council to gain acceptance for an initial set of environmental metrics to establish a baseline and then commit to annual reporting and measurement of these metrics. This will allow the City to benchmark its performance against other comparable jurisdictions and gain an understanding of other environmental actions that are reasonable for the City to undertake.

Recommend and implement a process for the review of the City's environmental practices and then to work with the city on a commitment to continuous environmental improvement and best management practices. Start by determining if "best practices are in place, identifying areas where gaps exist, and suggesting where procedures/practices can be found. To commit to a regular schedule of review for all City departments and to report back, including progress.

Push the existing Commission recommendation for an "environmental community event" as part of an existing City event or to stand on its own. This event should be more than display booths; it should be expert forums for immediate information sharing or peer-to-peer review. It should be for the benefit of residents and small business. The winners of the City's environmental awards should attend to tell their stories. The information sharing started at the fair should continue on the website through interactive databases or specified web chats.

Work with the City to improve the environment side of the City's websites both in terms of underscoring accomplishments, available services, and peer-to-peer review such as neighborhood-based environmental renovation stories to be spotlighted for learning and replicating.

Work with the Mayor and Council in developing new procedures responsive to new ordinances or City policy such as Zoning, Green Buildings or others.

Recruit additional volunteers for the Working Groups, and review and expand the role of various working groups.

Review the working group structure and adjust work scopes according to future challenges and needs.

### **High Performance Building Working Group**

Work to raise awareness among all appropriate Rockville City points of influence to ensure that “Green Building” requirements are met and exceeded for municipal building projects and major public development within the city.

Work with City staff and the Mayor and Council to support the development and integration of a “Green Building” Ordinance.

Develop focused recommendations for the Sustainable Rockville strategy with regards to water conservation and energy generation and utilization.

Continue to develop and publish energy tips for homeowners and small businesses.

Work with the outreach group to develop an education plan for high performance buildings to compliment a “Green Building” Ordinance.

Provide recommendations to the Mayor and Council that promote education and increased recycling options for compact fluorescent light bulbs.

### **Watershed Protection Working Group**

Continue to formalize comments and inquiries to the Department of Public Works on the Cabin John Watershed Study and Plan.

Finalize, print and distribute the business brochure on Water Protection and on the new Water Quality Protection Ordinance and begin the development of a residential water protection brochure.

Continue and extend the education of working group members on stream monitoring to develop and assist City staff in the implementation of a community-wide volunteer stream-monitoring program.

Perform spring and fall stream cleanup events with advance planning and publicity to gain broader citizen support.

Begin to identify and develop an outreach approach to schools on water protection

Coordinate and work with the Outreach and Education Working Group to develop exhibit and handout materials to increase awareness for watershed protection issues through the Environmental Commission’s attendance at more community-based events.

### **Environmental Outreach and Education Working Group**

Help shape the communications interface of the Commission by providing a consistent look and message.

Educate and encourage the citizens, schools and businesses of Rockville to take environmentally responsible actions.

Assist Commissioners and/or working group volunteers in coordinating with other City Boards, Commissions, task forces and others City groups as needed to ensure that regular reporting and information exchange between the assigned Commission liaison and the rest of the Commission occurs in a timely and meaningful way.

Assist the Commission and other working groups in the design and development of outreach materials.

Work with the City on the implementation of an improved plan for the environmental awards—including recruiting candidates and providing ways that awardees benefit by receiving the recognition—opportunities to share their experience by participating in a speakers' bureau or putting general profile about their awarding winning actions on the website so best practices can be shared, etc.

Work with the City on concepts for a City-wide environmental event to bring best practices, products and demonstrations to residents and business owners

Increase and improve the environmental information available on the Rockville website.

### **Goals for FY 2009:**

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